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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the TALK (Technician/Apprentice Language Kit) model for "blue collar" Peace Corps trainees. The model seeks to overcome the low language aptitude of such trainees in academic learning situations by emphasizing their demonstrated task-oriented language learning ability. It also seeks to address the problem of inadequate teachers by employing a few highly-qualified supervisory instructors while capitalizing on the minimal teaching ability of the HCN (host country national) teaching apprentices. TALK has three chief features: (1) its one-to-one technician-to-apprentice design; (2) its applicability to cross-cultural training; (3) its status as a collection of learning elements: expert supervisory instructors, monolingual apprentices, craft-oriented language materials, a shop and necessary machines for the practice of the skills in question. The model rests on assumptions about the role of conviction in language learning (e.g., that any normal adult can learn as much of a foreign language as he is thoroughly convinced he needs), and on the importance of personal relationships with monolingual speakers of the target language. Earl Stevick's memorandum on the Mikro-Kor Plan for language learning, which stresses task oriented learning and close relationship with the HCN instructor, and the "Summary of TALK model for Ceylon Blue Collar Workers" are appended. (FWB)

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A DRAFT PLAN FOR EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING MODEL: NEW DIRECTIONS VOLUNTEER-IN-TRAINING

Robert Rebert

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Technician/Apprentice Language Kit "TALK"

This model is suggested in response to the general experiences of the Peace Corps that "Blue Collar" recruits are very often slow language learners. It is also the experience of the Peace Corps that it employs many marginal teachers. This is principally due to the fact that the languages taught by the Peace Corps are often spoken only by HCNs who are not trained teachers. Certainly they are not equipped to face the difficult task of dealing with the (low aptitude) slow language learner.

This model attempts to emphasize the strengths of the "Blue Collar" trainee, i.e. task-oriented language learning ability. At the same time this model seeks to address the problem of inadequate teachers by employing a few highly-qualified supervisory instructors while capitalizing on the minimal teaching ability of the HCN apprentices.

The salient conclusion I have extracted from past training programs for technicians is this: they learned

very little language in the usual Peace Corps training environment, but they have been able to reach a functional level of proficiency in a training environment to which they are accustomed, the shop. (cf. Guinea Mechanics documentation). A second conclusion has been the surprising ability of technicians to learn language from technicians who function within the context of the target language.

Mature craftsmen like those requested in the Ceylon 104 would enter a training program in which they are given an opportunity to share their craft with apprentices from day one of training. They would not find themselves in a classroom environment detached from the craft in which they are already skilled. This model assumes certain "givens," such as the presence of monolingual HCN apprentices throughout the initial training.

The model is called TALK: The title indicates three important factors: (Technician/Apprentice Language Kit .)

1. that the design of the model is one-to-one, technician-to-apprentice learning relationship.

3. The principal source of visceral conviction is an experience of inadequacy, but
4. A feeling of complete and hopeless inadequacy extinguishes effort.
5. The most telling demonstrations of adequacy or inadequacy take place in direct contact with other people. The subject matter of one's own professional responsibility is likely to be of particular interest, and a dependable source of anxiety.
6. The non-academic learner needs faith in his teacher, hope that he can overcome his own inadequacy, and a warm and continuing relationship with at least one monolingual speaker of the target language.

2. that though language is the component referred to in this model, we feel it is equally and coincidentally applicable to cross-cultural training.
3. that it is a kit or a collection of learning elements; namely, expert supervisory instructors, monolingual apprentices, craft-oriented language materials, a shop and necessary machinery for the practice of the skills in question.

Dr. Stevick lists the following assumptions on which we formulate an hypothesis in designing the TALK model for mature craftsmen.

Assumptions:

1. Any normal adult can learn as much of any foreign language as he is thoroughly convinced he needs. Conviction in this sense is visceral more than it is intellectual.
2. The language-acquisition performance of high-aptitude and low-aptitude people differ most when conviction is absent. (In this respect the MLAT is conducted in a vacuum.)

Suggestions:

1. That a late teenager or young adult of the same sex be engaged as an "apprentice" for each crafts-man-Volunteer (cV), or for a pair or cVs.
2. Each apprentice should either be monolingual or agree to act as if he were.
3. Each apprentice should have at least some interest in learning something of the trade of his cV.
4. The cVs should spend about half of each day in contact with their apprentices, part of that time being devoted to teaching some rudiments of their trades. The other half of the day should be spent in preparing for the contact hours, with the help of a language teacher.
5. The apprentices might also serve as cultural "hosts," in the sense of my memorandum of the 'Micro-Kor plan.' (Stevick's 'Micro-Kor Plan' memorandum follows)

TO: All concerned

FROM: Earl W. Stevick

SUBJECT: The 'Micro-Kor Plan'

Recent discussions with people in Micronesia and Korea have helped to clarify my thinking about how in-country language training might be conducted. The result is the 'Micro-Kor Plan,' which is presented here for your comment. With modifications, I think it may also be applicable to other training situations.

Language training, whether in the United States or in the host country, should probably begin with a brief introductory period (perhaps 75-150 hours) which is devoted to establishing pronunciation and familiarizing the student with the principal structural devices. This is the stage at which intensive audio-visual instruction, perhaps programmed and perhaps even self-instructional, can be dramatically useful, if it is available. Emphasis is quite frankly on manipulation of the mechanics of the language, so that in the stage that follows, these matters will already be partially familiar to the students.

After this introductory phase, each day's work is divided into two parts: an academic 'base' and a non-academic 'application.'

The academic base is developed through a continuing relationship with a 'teacher;' the non-academic 'application' is developed through a continuing relationship with a 'host.' The host is an individual or (better) a family that is able and willing to spend at least two or three hours a day with the student. The relationship with the host(s) may or may not include shared residence. The host(s) probably know little or no English. The idea of having language students live with local people is of course not new. But in both Micronesia and Korea there were reports that "I lived with them, yes, but we never seemed to know what to say to each other." Apparently the full potential of residence with native speakers was hardly being scratched. It is this problem with which t present memorandum is chiefly concerned. In the Micro-Kor Plan, each day's work is built around a 'micro-task' -- a short, practical assignment which the student hopes to accomplish together with his host(s). Learning to 'say' something is then only a step toward learning to 'do' something. In planning these 'tasks,'

one must remember that recurrent work is not necessarily matched by recurrent <u>language:</u> two women who wash clothes together every day probably do <u>not</u> say to one another "Now I am putting the clothes into the water. Now I am adding soap" every time they perform these actions.

Microtasks may be either primarily verbal or primarily physical, and they may center on acquiring information, or on acquiring skills.

	<u>Verbal</u>	<u>Physical</u>
<u>Information</u>	Eliciting	Exploring physical environment
<u>Skill</u>	Making culturally useful judgments	Coaching by host(s)

Examples of these four kinds of micro-task are given below, in terms of African culture:

1. <u>Eliciting information</u>:

   a) Find out about your host's family; how they are related what kinship terms they use in referring to one another and in addressing one another.

   b) Find out what kinds of weather you may expect at various times of year.

2. Making culturally useful judgments:

   a) Find out which trees are suitable for cutting as firewood, which are not, and why.

   b) Find out which bananas are suitable for picking, which for eating raw, which for other purposes.

3. Exploring:

   a) For each of the following common articles find out what it is, where it is kept, who uses it, and what it is used for: jembe, panga, mwiko, taa.

   b) Find out the location from which your hosts get each of the following: water, firewood, oil. Be able to tell how to get there from your house.

4. Coaching:

   a) Have your host(s) coach you until you can cultivate maize or water cabbage efficiently.

   b) Have your host(s) coach you in playing a distinctive local game.

In the 'academic' part of the program (say four hours in the morning), the 'teacher' explains the task to the student and teaches him the language and the non-verbal behavior that he

thinks the student is likely to need either for production or for comprehension, in his conversation with the host(s). In the 'non-academic' part (probably) the afternoon and/or evening), the student would use what he had learned, and report on it the next day to his teacher. During the afternoon task sessions, the student would be supported 'vertically' by the morning's preparatory session, but also 'horizontally' by the fact that the hosts have become partially familiar with his strengths and weaknesses. Needless to say, the student and the host(s) will and should interact in other ways as well, but the daily task provides a definite yet shifting focus.

In a program like the one I have described, much of the material to be used in the academic component can be prefabricated. That is to say, such things as dialogs, vocabularies, 'microwaves,' and drills can be prepared for each 'task.' The teacher may add finishing touches, appropriate for what he knows of the actual people and places that will be involved. His goal as he does so is to anticipate, just as closely as he can, exactly what the student will want to

ask, and exactly the answers he will get. The prospect of the afternoon's application thus keeps both the teacher and the materials developer on their toes.

The role of the language coordinator is obviously crucial. He must have three kinds of knowledge. He must know the student's language and culture, and the target language and culture, and how they contrast. He must also be familiar with rudimentary techniques of language teaching, and with the materials that are available. Finally, he must know what is going on in class, and what is going on between students and hosts. On the basis of all this knowledge, he will constantly be making decisions of two kinds. First are logistic decisions: who is to be where when and for how long, doing what. Second is choice of micro-tasks. These must be relevant to the interests of the student, and neither too large nor too small for a day's work.

We have said that the person who makes these decisions is the key figure in any language teaching project. His training is therefore the most crucial step in preparing for such a project. His personality is the most crucial element in establishing and maintaining staff morale. And he is an indispensable

participant in the preparation of the language materials themselves.

Although this plan of instruction was worked out originally for in-country training of students who are living with their hosts, it can be modified and used in other programs as well. If there are sufficient native speakers at the training site, one group can play the role of hosts while another group serves as conventional instructors. If there are not that many native speakers, the same person may serve part of the time as instructor for one class, and the rest of the time as host for another.

In summary, then:

1. Peace Corps training should be for life in the host country.
2. Life consists principally of relationships among people.
3. In any training situation, the most important fact is the relationships which exist and which are developing among instructors, among students, and between students and instructors.
4. Language acquisition is one medium in which these

relationships may be established and in which they may (or may not) flourish.

5. The purpose of training is not to teach students language (and non-linguistic behavior), but to teach them to <u>use</u> it.

6. 'What happens between learner and teacher (or host) determines what is learned and how well it is learned.' But this statement is either true or false, depending on what we mean by 'happen.' If we mean something that occurs as a result of following a detailed script with complete stage directions, I suggest it is false. It is true if we mean what comes about as a result of the natural interaction of unique individuals. In this sense, the language coordinator lays the fire, provides the spark, and nurses the flame along until it catches; the job of the textbook writer is to provide highly combustible material.

SUMMARY OF "TALK" MODEL FOR CEYLON BLUE COLLAR WORKERS

Pre-Invitational Staging will either convince the craftsmen of the interesting nature of the project or it will convince them they are not suited for this kind of program.

Trainers: The two instructors, one for language and one for technical training, must work hand-in-hand to develop the curriculum and to adapt the materials for both language and the apprentice craft materials. They should be hired well in advance of the program in order to familiarize themselves with the Voc-Ed institutes mentioned in the 104. They should have picked the apprentices.

Materials: The Sinhala materials developed by McDougall should be adapted for use in this very technical program. This poses a real problem until we have better teaching materials. The technicians should each have dictionaries (Carter's seems to be the best.)

The ideas and methodology herein will be of use to "TALK" instructors so as to prepare the technicians for continued use of informants (apprentices) in the process of in-service learning as they proceed through their tour of duty.

Monolingual Informant Techniques for Peace Corps Volunteers

An Aspect of Continued Language Learning In-Country

I. INTRODUCTION

Techniques for learning the sounds and structures of a language, especially unwritten, from native speakers of the language, usually pedagogically unskilled and often unlettered, have long been part of modern descriptive linguistics. But the Peace Corps has only recently recognized their value. Where Do I Go From Here? by Charles H. and Marguerite E. Kraft devotes one section to Peace Corps Volunteer use of language informants. It was the first such study supported by the Peace Corps. Most recently, these techniques have been ably described by Judy Beinstein, former Language Coordinator in Indian languages. Although originally developed for Peace Corps Volunteers in India, they are universally applicable. Their purpose is to allow PCVs to:

continue language learning in the field without trained teachers;

avoid the pitfall of talking about language through involved grammatical discourse with local "scholars";

develop their own materials concentrating on problems peculiar to their dialect area and job when text, especially drills and exercises, are unavailable;

create varied and interesting learning sessions for both Volunteer and informant.

Ideally, Volunteers should be taught these techniques during training, so that they may eventually take over several classes a week. Bestowing such increasing responsibility on trainees as the program concludes facilitates transition from training to field. In the field, the Volunteer's success with informants depends on complete control of the learning situation and a proficiency level of at least an S-1+.

Following are Judy Beinstein's monolingual informant techniques, which are sequenced from highly structured to unstructured. The working language is Hindi. All may be used singly or in combination. They by no means exhaust all possible methodologies, however; Volunteers should experiment with new methods of eliciting information once these are mastered.

II. WORKING WITH LANGUAGE INFORMANTS

1. Question Words

This technique is most effective at the beginning of informant work. Later, it should be used periodically to drill question and answer patterns.

The Volunteer begins the lesson:

I will say some words. (You) use each word in a question.	mãi kuch shabd boluũgaa (gii). (aap) har shabd-koo sawaal-mẽe istamaal kiijiyee (booliyee).
The first word is_____.	pahlaa shabd_____hai.

All words given the informant are question words like:

what	kyaa
who	kon
where	kahaa
when	kab

etc.

After the informant has devised his question, the Volunteer repeats it until he understands and can say it with ease. When a word in the question isn't understood and cannot be demonstrated by action or object, the Volunteer should ask that the word be used in a sentence:

Use the word_____in another sentence.	shabd-koo_____waakya-mee istamaal kiijiyee (booliyee).*

The informant should continue substituting the word in sentences until its meaning is clear. Once the question has been mastered and recorded, the next question word can be given.

The next word is_____.	duusree shabd_____hai.

The informant should continue to make up questions with different question words until the Volunteer has learned and written down several. Once all questions are recorded, the Volunteer should return to and ask the informant the first recorded question. Then, the informant should answer the question.

Now I will ask you these questions.	ab mai aap-see yee sawaal puuchuugaa (gii).

*Parenthetical items may indicate masculine versus feminine gender (gaa or taa, masculine; gii or tii, feminine) or a lexical alternative.

And I will give the answers. aur mai jawaab duugaa (gii). Once the question and answer patterns have been learned, Volunteers should, on_ their own time, write similar questions and answers substituting different nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs to be drilled in the next lesson. For example, the question, "What do you see," and its answer, "I see a small boy playing," form the following drill:

What do you see?	I	see	a small boy playing
I notice.	You	notice	bullock cart traveling.
We hear.	We	hear	woman selling fruit.
They	They		farmer plowing.

Twelve questions can be made from the question pattern; forty-eight answers can be made from the answer pattern.

2. Pictures

Use of pictures is one of the easiest informant techniques mainly because length of the informant's description is easily controlled and new vocabulary is completely explained by the picture's content. The Volunteer shows the informant a picture and says:

Look at this picture.	yee tasbiir (citra) deekhiyee.
Show me and explain what you see in the picture.	mujhee dikhaaiyee aur samjhaaiyee (bataaiyee) ki aap citra-mee kyaa deekhtee hai.

Tell me in four or five sentences.	caar yaa paac waakya-mee mujhee bataaiyee.

The Volunteer should then let the informant talk about the pictures and repeat his explanation several times. Then the Volunteer should use the same descriptive explanation. If he cannot repeat the entire explanation, then he should ask the informant to repeat the explanation sentence by sentence.

Please repeat one sentence at a time.	eek baar-mee eek waakya booliyee.
I will repeat the sentence after you.	mai aap-kee piichee waakya duhraauugaa (gii).

Sentences should be repeated until the entire explanation is mastered. The Volunteer should ask questions about what people in the picture are doing if the informant's explanation is too simple. The Volunteer might also record vocabulary under corresponding pictures to compile a pictorial dictionary by topic. Reviewing vocabulary with these pictures eliminates need for English translation; terminology will be learned functionally.

3. <u>Associations</u>

The advantages of the "association" technique are expansion of vocabulary on one topic and eliciting information on job-related objects and ideas.

The Volunteer tells the informant:

I will say a word.	mai eek shabd booluugaa (gii).
(You) say several sentences about that word.	(aap) us shabd-kee baaree-mee kaii waakya booliyee
Say whatever comes into your head.	aap-kee dimaag-mee joo bhii aataa hoo booliyee.

Initially, the Volunteer should use words for tangible objects, like box, pencil, water, etc., so that the informant can have a visual as well as an audible stimulus. Later, words for abstracts, like education, liberty, family, etc., may be used for insight into cultural values.

Again, the Volunteer should repeat and master the informant's sentences.

4. Task-Oriented Situations

Because task-oriented situations deal with action, they provide excellent practice in verb usage. Because the task involves props and actions, vocabulary is completely defined. Because only one task is described, vocabulary on one topic is expanded.

The Volunteer chooses some task or process, perhaps related to his job, that he needs to learn to describe. He many need to supply visual aids involved in the task so that the informant can demonstrate the process or task he is explaining. The Volunteer asks (as he hands over the props, for example):

How do you cook rice?	aap chaawal ḍaisee pakaatee hai?
How do you write a letter?	aap ciThii kaisee likhtee hai?
How do you wash a baby?	aap bachee-koo kaisee mahlaatee hai?

etc.

(These as well as other situations are suitable only if cooking, writing, washing, etc. equipment is available for demonstration).

show me.	mujhee dikhaaiyee (samjhaaiyee, bataaiyee).

The Volunteer should then let the informant explain and demonstrate the entire process. The informant should repeat the process,

Please repeat the whole thing.	saarii baat duhraaiyee;

then break the explanation into two or three sentence units. The Volunteer should repeat these sentences until he can explain and demonstrate the entire process himself.

Say the first few sentences.	pahlee kuch waakya booliyee.
I will repeat.	mai duhraauugaa (gii).
Say the next few sentences.	kuch aur waakya booliyee.

Once the Volunteer has mastered the explanation in the present tense, he may then go through the same explanation using imperative, future, past, subjunctive, or conditional forms. He can also change verb person to I, we, you, they, etc. He will thus become more flexible in using tense, number, and gender.

5. Narratives

Narratives are good comprehension exercises for the Volunteer and provide practice in generating sentences that can be corrected.

The Volunteer asks the informant to relate an incident or tell a short story.

Tell me an interesting thing that happened to you once (an interesting story).	aap-kee saath kabhil joo eek mazeedaar ghaTnaa hoo, bataaiyee (yaa kooii mazeedaar kahaanii kahaaiyee).

The informant relates whatever tale he likes. If the Volunteer wants him to talk about some specific subject, he says, for example:

Tell me about your school days.	apnee skuul-kee dinoo-kee-baaree-mee bataaiyee.

The story or incident should be repeated by the informant, then summarized by the Volunteer.

If you repeat, then I will summarize.	agar aap duhraaee, too mai saksheep (thooDee-mee) booluugaa (gii).

When the informant has repeated his monologue enough for total comprehension, the Volunteer should summarize.

If the Volunteer so desires, he may also repeat the original monologue and/or ask questions about it.

6. Role Play

In role play, the Volunteer can generate his own sentences in a simulated real-life situation yet benefit from correction. A role play is a situation taken from real life where the informant and Volunteer play the roles of people in that situation (e.g. a taxi driver and his passenger; a cloth merchant and his customer; a rural development officer and a farmer. The Volunteer must describe both the situation and the roles to be acted. The dialogue then begins. When the dialogue is finished, roles should be reversed so that the Volunteer can observe, then copy the informant's original role. Correction by the informant is implicit in this technique.

I will describe a situation (Here the situation is described).	mai eek haalat bayaan karuugaa (gii).
You be_____.	aap_____banaaiyee.
I will be_____.	mai_____banuugaa (gii).

7. Free Conversation

Like role play, this technique is useful for:

generating original sentences;
expressing personal ideas about something;
and comprehension.

The Volunteer asks the informant to talk about a mutual acquaintance, historical or legendary character, or national hero. The Volunteer should ask questions and add comments about the informant's description. (The same procedure may be applied to any topic). When talking about people the Volunteer should ask:

If you were_____, what would you do?	agar aap_____hootee, too aap kyaa kartaa.

The Volunteer should also tell the informant about people he knows and action he would take if he were they.

If I were_____I would do thus.	agar mai_____hootaa (tii), too aisaa kartaa (tii).

8. Reading and Discussion

Reading is good for vocabulary expansion. When the Volunteer reads with the informant, a dictionary is unnecessary. However, every Volunteer should have a dictionary so that he can read on his own and check new word meanings and usage. The Volunteer starts with elementary reading materials and asks his informant to help. Graded texts are suggested. As his accuracy and speed improves, he should start reading newspaper articles also. All reading selections can be used for discussion and/or summary.